

Assemblyman
PAUL KORETZ
Forty-second Assembly District



proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks

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**Contact: Teresa Stark (916)319-2042
cell (916)212-3986**

Koretz Calls for a Suspension of Executions in California

AB 1121 Would Stop Executions for Two Years While Study Goes Forward

(Sacramento) – Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) today announced the introduction of legislation that would place a two-year moratorium on any execution being carried out in California. At a press conference in the State Capitol, Assemblyman Koretz was joined by several individuals to announce Assembly Bill 1121, including five people exonerated of serious crimes they did not commit but for which they were convicted, as well as the parents of a young woman who was murdered.

“Our system of justice is far from perfect, and capital punishment is no exception. I know in my heart that innocent people have been executed,” said Assemblyman Koretz. “Since the early 1970’s, 119 death-row inmates were found to be innocent and subsequently exonerated, in some cases escaping death by hours. No one in our free and fair society should stand by while innocent people are put to death at the hands of the state. This is an extreme travesty of justice that cannot be tolerated,” he said.

In late 2004, the California Senate established the bi-partisan *California Commission on the Fair Administration of Justice* to study and determine the extent to which California’s criminal justice system has failed in the past and why innocent people were being convicted, and sometimes executed, in this state. The Commission is required to make recommendations for reform to the Legislature by no later than December 31, 2007.

AB 1121 places a temporary suspension of executions by the warden of the state prison, to continue while the Legislature fully considers the Commission’s findings and recommendations and has either enacted legislation to end this moratorium or extend it. However, if the Legislature fails to act, the moratorium shall end on January 1, 2009.

“As someone who originally faced the death penalty and went to prison for a crime I did not commit, I embody the failures of the California judicial system,” said Gloria Killian, one of the wrongfully convicted individuals who spoke at the press conference. “I know that many people are in the same situation that I was. It is imperative that we stop the state sponsored murder of innocent people,” she said.

“Now, more than ever, Californians are questioning the use of the death penalty and calling for assurances that it be fairly applied. I am not calling for abolition of the death penalty. Instead, we must concentrate all of our efforts on making sure that it is administered consistently with fundamental principles of fairness, justice, equality and due process under state and federal law,” Koretz concluded.

AB 1121, which is co-authored by Assemblymembers Sally Lieber and Mervyn Dymally, is currently in the State Assembly and will face its first vote in the Assembly Public Safety Committee.

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